

Born With Fire and Gold in our Eyes by Luddleston

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Summary:

Predictably, the first thing Lance does when Keith steps onto the Castle of Lions with the rest of the Blades, is yell at him.

Born With Fire and Gold in our Eyes

Author's Note:

I was trying to think of something to say here but let's settle for I have too many emotions about Keith.

Like, at least 12 too many.

(Title is from Fire n' Gold by Ben Schuller)

Predictably, the first thing Lance does when Keith steps onto the Castle of Lions with the rest of the Blades, is yell at him. He's been planning this in his head for the last five minutes, at least, and it was a whole lot of righteous anger, but he didn't expect Keith to look so *relieved* to see them.

And so Lance's plan to do a whole lot of *even though you're part of the Blade of Marmora, you'll still always be a part of team Voltron, and you can't just go sacrificing yourself left and right* flies right out the window. Instead, he puts his hands on either side of Keith's face and pulls him in, and just *unleashes* all the panic that's been trapped inside of him ever since Voltron broke through that magnetic field and the first thing he heard over the comms was Keith, in a Galra fighter, about to kamikaze himself into a particle barrier.

"You almost *died* out there!" he shouts, and Keith takes that pretty easy. He looks steadily more confused when Lance keeps going, "I almost—we almost *lost* you, I can't believe you'd just—*Keith*, don't ever scare me like that again!"

And then Lance hugs him. He's a hugger, it's a natural instinct. He'd do the same thing if Hunk almost died. Except, if it was Hunk, his heart probably wouldn't be pounding so hard and he probably wouldn't be thinking about the scent of sweat and ash in his hair, and he *definitely* wouldn't start shaking and he *absolutely* wouldn't start crying. But here he stands, holding Keith like if he just keeps him here, he can't go off on some other Blade death mission, shaking in his armor and crying into Keith's hair.

Keith is not a hugger. He doesn't really respond well, or at all, but his hands go to Lance's back, carefully patting him on the armored bits of his suit where he can't even feel it. "I'm fine, Lance," he says, "really. You can let me go now."

Lance probably should let him go now. He doesn't. And Keith must be making some kind of face over his shoulder, maybe mouthing, "HELP," at the other paladins, because Shiro steps up and lays a hand on Lance's shoulder.

"Why don't you let Keith go debrief with the rest of the Blade," he suggests, peeling Lance away, and Lance scrubs at the corners of his eyes with the back of one gloved hand, because nobody else gets to know that he cried a little bit.

"Yeah, um. Okay." And then he's at a loss again, because where anybody else would try to laugh it off, Keith just gives him this openly searching look, like he wants to know why Lance is about three seconds away from having a panic attack on the bridge of the ship. Lance reaches forward and takes Keith's hand in his, able to feel the heat of his skin through his gloves, and drops his head onto Keith's shoulder again for just a second, taking a deep but unsteady breath. "Keith, I'm sorry, I just. Back there, when all I could see was you about to dive-bomb that ship—that's the most scared I've ever been."

"I don't know how it could be," Keith says, and yeah, that's pretty reasonable, considering Lance has almost died himself.

"Me neither." It's a lie.

And then, because Shiro's going to have to start pulling on him again if he doesn't, Lance steps back, squeezes Keith's hand one more time before heading out of the bridge, so he doesn't have to watch Keith walk away.

— — —

Lance ends up helping Allura take care of anyone who was wounded in the battle, because then at least he feels like he's useful. Plus, all the chaos of

people running around the room, shouting instructions at him, keeps his mind off of things. Keith things.

He can handle the minor cuts and scrapes pretty well, but anything that looks like it would need someone who's at least an EMT, he passes off to Allura and her possibly-magical Altean healing technology. Most of the injuries aren't serious—Lance knows it's because anyone who took enough damage to their ship to get critically injured didn't make it back.

He doesn't see any of the Blade of Marmora, and wonders if they all survived unscathed, or if they're just used to taking care of themselves.

Midway through trying to figure out the best way to bandage up an alien that has fur and more than four arms, Shiro sits down next to him. He's got one of those little hydration packs that looks like a juice box, and sets it down between them.

"Thanks, man," Lance says, once he's tied off the bandage and sent the guy on his way.

"You doing alright?" Shiro asks, in that quiet tone that's normally reserved for Pidge and, Lance assumes, other small children.

He takes a long slurp of the space-juice box to avoid answering. Then, because he has to, "yeah, just a little shaken up."

Shiro gives him a look like he doesn't believe him.

Lance, because he's weak to Shiro's disbelieving looks, keeps going. "I just couldn't handle the idea that I might never see him again." He doesn't have to give a name. "I mean, the last thing I said to him was a *joke*. What if I never got to say—ugh."

"I think about that a lot, too," Shiro says.

"What, with everyone? Is that why you're always so serious?"

"No, not—I mean, since seeing Holt again. I mean, Matthew." Then, a sigh, because he knows he's gotten it wrong again. "Matt."

Lance takes longer than he should've to figure out where Shiro's going with this, because he's a little slow about these things, sometimes. "Wait. *Oh.*" He crushes his empty juice box in his hand and starts moving into Shiro's personal space, poking him in the shoulder and doing his best serious Garrison Officer voice. "What is your relationship with Matt Holt, Shirogane?"

"Stop it," Shiro says, batting him away. "This isn't about that. Plus, I don't know the answer."

"Aww." Lance sits back, frowning. Shiro really shouldn't have to help him with his stupid—*it's not a crush, it's not a crush*—when he's got his own stuff to deal with.

Shiro doesn't let up. "What would you have said to Keith, if you had known what might happen?"

Lance goes tellingly red.

"You should tell him now," Shiro says, "you've got the chance, he's on the ship. Take my advice, Lance. Don't wait around." He leaves Lance alone after that.

Tell him now. Easy for him to say. He's not the one who's—who's got *feelings for*—oh, just face it. He's not the one who's in love with Keith.

— — —

Once Lance is no longer needed and Allura officialy dismisses him, (they're both paladins, yeah, but she's still the princess) he goes back to his room. He tells himself he's not trying to avoid Keith, but he feels a little bit like he's trying to avoid Keith.

It doesn't seem to be working.

Keith is staring at him, his frown getting more and more intense like if he just pouts hard enough, Lance will telepathically figure out what he wants to say. He'd just knocked on the door and walked right in without invitation,

and now he's staring. Lance is sure Keith didn't come over just to stare at him. Well, mostly sure. Wouldn't be the weirdest thing Keith's done.

"Hi...?" Lance starts, because Keith seems to be beyond even simple greetings.

"Hey." Keith is still standing awkwardly in the middle of the room, and he folds his arms, then unfolds them. "Shiro told me to come talk to you," he finally admits.

Oh. Keith's here under orders.

"What about?" Lance asks, like he's stupid enough not to know. He should've realized that Shiro would talk to both of them, and that Keith's a bit less of the 'ignore the problem and it'll go away' type than Lance is.

"I dunno. He just saw me and said I should talk to you before I go. So, I'm talking to you." Keith says it like they're going to have this brief little chat and everything's gonna be fine, simple as that.

Keith has no idea what he's getting into.

"Come here." Lance pats the bed next to him and Keith picks his way through the messy room until he's sitting beside Lance. Because he's definitely gonna need to be sitting down for this conversation. Lance doesn't want to deal with the fallout if what he says literally brings Keith to his knees.

Well. That might be a little dramatic.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Keith asks.

"What? I'm not looking at you like anything!" Lance brings a hand to his face subconsciously, like he's trying to figure out what expression he's making by touch alone.

"You're looking at me like you're about to tell me my dog died," Keith says, "and I don't have a dog, so I know that's not it. What is it? Is Red not letting

you in?" Of course he thinks Lance is upset about something practical. As if Lance has his priorities in order. That's a funny thought.

Lance just shakes his head. He lifts his hands again, then drops them in his lap, because he was about to try to hold Keith's hands, and he's pretty sure Keith would be pissed about that even though he's wearing gloves.

Has Lance ever seen him without gloves?

"Shiro told me to talk to you, too," he finally says.

One of Keith's perfect eyebrows arches. "Why...?"

"I dunno, probably because I had a freaking meltdown as soon as I saw you. Because that's apparently not a normal reaction when someone you—someone you *care about* nearly... yeah."

"I didn't..." Keith starts, and the look on his face is like Lance actually did tell him his nonexistent dog was playing in the street and got hit by a spaceship. "...you care about me?"

Lance rolls his eyes, because really, that's what Keith is taking away from this? Really? "Of course I do! I mean, maybe I didn't when you tried to steal Shiro—"

"I wasn't stealing him."

"—or when we were hanging out in your weird desert shack, but after that? Of course I care."

Keith has been watching Lance's hands while he talks, probably because they don't stop moving, and maybe because he doesn't want to look him in the eyes. Lance would like to think it's the former.

"I had to do it, you know," he says. He takes an un-Keith-ly shaky breath before he keeps going. "If I hadn't, Voltron would have—you all would have died. I didn't have a choice. It was me or you, and I picked you. I'd always pick you."

"Right, yes, Voltron is the most important thing in the universe or whatever, but you *seriously* had no other ideas besides *that*?"

Keith shakes his head and his hair falls in his eyes. Lance wants to brush them aside, wants Keith to cut his damn hair because how does that not get in the way all the time? "No. I'm not talking about Voltron. I'm talking about you. Lance. If it was me or you."

Why the hell would he do that?

"Why the hell would you do that!?"

Then, Keith's head jerks up and he looks Lance right in the eyes, frowning like he's thinking very hard about what to say next, or like he wants to say something but he's trying to think of something else to say instead. Lance would know.

When Keith finally does have his words, he spits them like he's arguing with Lance and telling him he's an idiot. But what he's saying is, "because I don't want to live in a world where you're dead!"

Lance doesn't respond. He just stares with his mouth literally open, until Keith breaks eye contact, shakes his head, and stands.

"This was stupid," Keith says. "I'm leaving."

Lance watches his one chance walk toward the door, and feels this little nudge, something impulsive, something the red paladin would do. He gets across the room in a few steps and has his hand around Keith's wrist before Keith even opens the door. "Wait."

"What?" Now Keith just looks pissed.

That tiny nudge of impulsivity is growing into something burning, a fire inside him getting hotter. "I need to tell you something. And if I don't tell you now, I don't know if I ever will. I tried—I tried to, before you left, but I couldn't make myself—I didn't know what to say."

Keith still looks like he's expecting it to be something bad. And, depending on how this goes and how angry Keith gets about it, it might end up being something bad. Lance wishes he could just kiss him. Just, screw this conversation, screw talking it out, kiss him. But Keith would probably punch him in the jaw. So he changes his grip on Keith's wrist, until he's almost holding his hand, tries once to take a breath, fails, and tries again.

This time, he gets it. "I'm in love with you."

"Are you... you're serious."

"Of course I'm serious!"

And of course, Keith's the one who gets to do the cool move, stepping toward him, putting a hand around his waist, the other on his cheek, pulling him into the kiss Lance had wanted to give him. His mouth is warm and his hands are warm and Lance hugs him close, and feels like they're in a bubble where nothing exists outside, no giant space robots or purple aliens that want to take over the universe. Just them. Just that kiss.

"I," Keith starts talking to him between kisses, "have been in love with you. For months."

Months. How many? Lance thinks back—it must've been since before Keith started his Blade training. Maybe even before they found Shiro again. He'll figure it out later, when he's doing something besides making out with Keith. Except that if he's lucky, he'll never be doing anything besides making out with Keith.

Eventually, the reality that he can't literally kiss Keith forever hits, and Keith steps back, runs his thumb over Lance's cheekbone, and Lance leans his head into it.

"I gotta go," he says, and his voice is a little more hoarse than usual. "I need to get back, Kolivan's going to be wondering where I am." He stays in the exact same place. Lance puts his hand over Keith's. "I really should leave," but he's kissing Lance again. This time, he's got his hands in Lance's hair

and Lance has his arms around Keith's waist, pulling them flush against each other, chest-to-chest.

"I'm not gonna let go of you, you know," Lance says, when they part again and Keith glances over his shoulder at the door. "You've got to go."

Keith hugs him then, squeezes him tight, and Lance thinks for a second that maybe now he's going to be the one who gets his shoulder cried on. But then Keith steps back, out of his embrace, and doesn't look teary. "I'm going. Stay safe, Lance."

"You too. I can't live without you either, you know."

Keith gives him one last kiss.

"Now I do."

Author's Note:

if you also have too many emotions about Voltrons, you can come cry with me on Tumblr @luddlestons or see more stuff I write about them (yes, right now this blog is exclusively Klance, because I don't write real things anymore apparently) on my official writing Tumblr @bambi-simmons